

Report to Congress Regarding the Plan for the Expenditure of Training Funds for the Northern Mariana Islands

The Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act (Workforce Act),¹ enacted on July 24, 2018, (P.L. 115-218) reauthorized the CW-1 visa for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The Workforce Act amended section 6 of “A Joint Resolution to approve the ‘Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America’, and for other purposes” (48 U.S.C. 1806) to require that not later than 120 days before the first day of Fiscal Year 2020, and annually thereafter, the Governor of the CNMI to submit to the Secretary of Labor a plan for the expenditure of amounts to be deposited into the Treasury of the CNMI for the sole and exclusive purpose of funding vocational education, apprenticeship, or other training programs for U.S. workers. Not later than 120 days after receiving each expenditure plan, the Secretary of Labor must issue a determination on the plan and “submit a report to Congress that describes the effectiveness of the Commonwealth Government at meeting the goals set forth in such plan.”

The U.S. Department of Labor’s (Department) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) received the CNMI’s plan, titled the Commonwealth Worker Fund Annual Plan, dated June 1, 2019. ETA noted in a letter to Governor Torres, dated September 19, 2019, that ETA reviewed and approved this plan. ETA noted the following:

- The Commonwealth Worker Fund Annual Plan allocations to Northern Marianas Trades Institute (NMTI) and Northern Marianas College (NMC) support apprenticeships and other training programs. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Department of Labor (CNMI DOL) has opportunities to leverage such resources in support of these efforts in developing Registered Apprenticeship programs and other in-demand and emerging careers.
- In the spirit of workforce development initiatives, the CNMI DOL has the opportunity to collaborate with NMC and NMTI. This collaboration could enhance career and technical education and training programs to support the advancement of U.S. workers within the CNMI labor force.

Since the plan was approved by the Department on September 19, 2019, and is an annual plan, it would be premature for the Department to describe the effectiveness of the Commonwealth Government in meeting the goals set forth in the plan.

¹ Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act (Pub. L. 115-218): <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/5956>